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Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CI

SUBJECT: NOON PRESS BRIEFING, APRIL 20, 1976
- - -NOON PRESS
FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS PREPARED FOR NOON PRESS BRIEFING, APRIL 20, 1976:

1. Q. IS IT TRUE THAT WE HAVE TALKED TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CHILE ABOUT RETALIATION AGAINST CHILEANS WHO TALKED WITH THE RECENT CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO SANTIAGO?

A. YES. ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS ON APRIL 19 CALLED IN THE CHILEAN AMBASSADOR MANUEL TRUCCO AND EXPRESSED TO HIM OUR CONCERN ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THERE HAS BEEN RETALIATION AND PRESSURE ON CHILEANS WHO TALKED WITH THE CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION. HE SPECIFICALLY REFERRED TO THE FORCED EXILE OF CHILEAN ATTORNEY JOSE A. ZALAQUETT, AND TO PRESSURE ON OTHER PEOPLE THE CONGRESSMEN MET WITH.

2. Q. WHY DID WE CALL IN THE CHILEAN AMBASSADOR?

A. BEFORE THE CONGRESSIONAL GROUP RETURNED, CHILEAN OFFICIALS ASSURED THE THREE CONGRESSMEN AND AMBASSADOR POPPER THAT NO RETALIATION WOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST THOSE
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CHILEANS WHO MET WITH THE CONGRESSMEN. AFTER THEY

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RETURNED, HOWEVER, MR. ZALAQUETT WAS FORCED INTO EXILE AND SEVERAL OTHERS HAVE ALLEGEDLY BEEN THREATENED AND DETAINED. THESE INCIDENTS SUGGEST THE POSSIBILITY OF A PATTERN OF HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION.

THE US HAS REPEATEDLY STATED THAT HUMAN RIGHTS ARE NOT PURELY THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF A SPECIFIC COUNTRY. THEY ARE SUBJECT TO ACCEPTED PRACTICE UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAWS.

3. Q. WHAT WAS THE CHILEAN AMBASSADOR'S REPLY?

A. AMBASSADOR TRUCCO REPLIED THAT ON THE BASIS OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO HIM FROM HIS GOVERNMENT, THESE INCIDENTS WERE NOT RELATED TO THE CONGRESSIONAL VISIT. HE REITERATED PREVIOUS ASSURANCES THAT NO REPRISALS WOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST THOSE WHO MET WITH THE US CONGRESSMEN. AMBASSADOR TRUCCO SAID HE WOULD INFORM HIS GOVERNMENT OF HIS CONVERSATION AND WOULD SEEK FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THESE ALLEGED INCIDENTS.

4. Q. IN VIEW OF THE GOC'S BREACH OF FAITH WITH US, DOES THE SECRETARY STILL HOPE TO GO TO CHILE FOR THE OAS MEETING?

A. NO FINAL DECISION HAS YET BEEN MADE ON THE SECRETARY'S TRIP. (FYI SPOKESMAN: I WOULD LIKE TO REMIND YOU THAT THE OAS VOTED TO HAVE ITS GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING IN SANTIAGO. YOU MAY ALSO RECALL THAT THE US, BY ABSTAINING IN THAT VOTE, DID NOT SUPPORT IT. WHAT I AM CONVEYING IS THAT WERE THE SECRETARY TO GO, HE WOULD BE BASICALLY ATTENDING THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING.)

(FYI SPOKESMAN: PREVIOUSLY THE US GOVERNMENT INQUIRED OF CHILEAN OFFICIALS THE REASONS FOR THE EXPULSION OF ZALAQUETT. THEY DENIED THEIR ACTION WAS RELATED TO THE VISIT OF THE US CONGRESSMEN. THEY TOLD US THEIR DECISION RESULTED FROM A LONG SERIES OF ACTIVITIES BY ZALAQUETT OVER A PERIOD OF TIME BEFORE AND AFTER THE CONGRESSIONAL VISIT WHICH THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED A DANGER TO NATIONAL

SECURITY. OUR EMBASSY REMINDED CHILEAN OFFICIALS OF THEIR ASSURANCES THERE WOULD BE NO RETALIATION AGAINST THOSE WHO MET WITH THE CONGRESSMEN. WE UNDERLINED THE CONCLUSION THAT WOULD BE DRAWN IN THE US: THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT STILL HAS NOT PROVIDED US WITH THE FULL INFORMATION WHICH SUPPORTS THEIR ARGUMENT THAT ZALAQUETT'S EXPULSION WAS UNRELATED TO THE CONGRESSIONAL VISIT.) ROBINSON

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